

~~Top Secret~~**USSR-WEST GERMANY: Appealing to German Nationalism**

Soviet officials have raised the prospect of German reunification several times in the last month in order to drive a wedge between West Germany and the US—primarily on the INF issue but beyond that as well. []

Soviet officials in Moscow have told West German journalists that the USSR would not object to reunification, in the form of a confederation of the two German states, if Bonn would move away from the US. West German journalists have told US officials in West Berlin that high-level Soviet party officials responsible for foreign affairs have suggested that the Soviets will support solutions to the "German problem" if Bonn refuses to accept US Pershing II and cruise missiles on its territory. []

Comment: This development involves more than a last-ditch effort to delay Western INF deployments by appealing to German nationalist sentiment. By raising the issue with West German journalists rather than privately with government officials, the Soviets are trying to play on public differences that have developed between the US and West Germany over such issues as economic sanctions and the possibility of "limited" nuclear war. []

The Soviets will increase their efforts to convince West Germans that Washington is taking advantage of Bonn's loyalty to the Western Alliance to pursue a dangerous policy of confrontation with the USSR that is inimical to German national interests in Europe. They will also emphasize that only Moscow is in a position to advance German interests in national reunification. Such tactics could also aim at intensifying doubts elsewhere in Western Europe and in the US about the reliability of the West German ally, hoping to undermine unity in the West. []

West German journalists are aware of Soviet motives and have played down the reunification issue. As a result, it has had virtually no impact on the INF debate, but it could receive more attention if the Soviets continue this approach after deployments begin next month.

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